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SUBJECT: U.S.-EU TROIKA MEETING ON AFRICA FEBRUARY 27

Classified By: Political M-C Christopher Davis for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Acting AF Assistant Secretary Phillip Carter represented the U.S. at the troika meeting with the EU on Africa issues, held February 27 in Brussels. The agenda included the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia and Sudan), Zimbabwe, West Africa (Mauritania and Guinea), the Great Lakes Region, Peace and Security in Africa, and Development in Africa. Before the meeting closed, Carter raised the issue of cooperation with China in Africa as well. The troika provided the context for an exchange of views on a variety of issues on which both sides generally agree, although the EU's willingness to include Mauritanian coup leader Aziz in negotiations is at odds with our approach. End Summary.

Somalia

12. (C) The European Commission (EC) kicked off the discussion on Somalia by citing three key issues: inclusiveness in the government, AMISOM, and the regional context. The EC supports incorporating all comers into the government, provided they wish to reconcile. AA/S Carter agreed that inclusiveness could help the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) deal with the spoilers, but warned that al Shabab's hard core, allied with foreign fighters, will likely have to be dealt with in another way, which President Sheikh Sharif understands. On AMISOM, the EC said the operation was absorbing more and more money. Carter challenged this characterization of AMISOM saying the operation was if anything constrained and underfunded, and needed to be made more robust. He cited poor management by the African Union, notably available AU funding for AMISOM which has not been used. The need for better management does not absolve the donor community of the need to increase funding to the operation. To the EC's expressed concern that all the Horn of Africa conflicts were growing interrelated and would necessitate a regional solution, Carter said there are more immediate threats, such as the security situation in Somalia, that we can deal with directly. Mentioning Ethiopia and Eritrea, he said approaching the Horn as a region raises more chronic issues that we can treat over time and with a different tool kit. Ethiopia

13. (C) Both the EC and U.S. voiced similar concerns about Ethiopia. The EC said there was currently internal EU debate over how to support elections next year, given the restrictive NGO law, among other things. The EC said it was taking proposals from NGOs to test the Ethiopian Government's interpretation of that law. The EC also voiced concerns about Eritrea, saying a solution to the border issue would improve the situation there. AA/S Carter agreed that Ethiopia's failure to address legitimate opposition and civil society demands creates the danger of widespread social unrest, and expressed concern about PM Meles's steps to reduce the political space in advance of the 2010 elections. He welcomed the move to test the NGO law, and encouraged the EU to press the Government of Ethiopia to allow the international community to develop capacity-building programs for local governments, and to establish an international observer presence in key cities and rural areas at least six months in advance of national elections. He also cast doubt on whether resolving the border issue would truly solve the problem in Eritrea, saying the problem was one of leadership rather than the border. Sudan (and Chad)

14. (C) Bronislava Tomasova, Africa Director in the Czech MFA, led off the discussion of Sudan for the Czech Presidency by saying that the EU is considering how the likely ICC arrest warrant for Bashir would impact the country and is contemplating how the EU as a whole should react. She said the Council had agreed to keep the EU reaction low profile in order not to derail the peace process; the EU will simply release a declaration. The Council is also discussing how the EU should conduct business with the Sudanese Government if Bashir stays in power. Tomasova said the EU and Member States would continue to engage the government to keep the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) dialogue going, but contact with Bashir himself would be restricted. AA/S Carter said the U.S. would have a muted response to the indictment and was encouraging others to follow suit. He informed the

EU that Sudanese Government officials intend for there to be a restrained response in Sudan, and do not anticipate hostile acts against foreigners or UNAMID. AA/S Carter said the ICC has to follow its course and address impunity. He said that the U.S. would continue high-level engagement with the Government of Sudan on a range of issues, including counterterrorism and the CPA, but would not look for

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opportunities to grip and grin with Bashir. He also warned that CPA implementation is the linchpin keeping Sudan from collapsing into widespread conflict again. He added that the EU was uniquely placed to help resolve a range of issues in Chad, and thanked the EU for its EUFOR operation in eastern Chad.

15. (C) Czech Director Tomasova and Carter exchanged views on the challenges facing credible elections in 2009 and their sequencing with a referendum in Southern Sudan, Carter saying the latter should not be held without the former. If a referendum were held today, he added, Southern Sudan would separate. But how would the Southern Sudanese survive, Carter asked rhetorically, noting a disconcerting split among the Dinka themselves. .

16. (SBU) Closing the Horn of Africa discussions, the Czech Presidency said the Member States were in the midst of developing a strategy toward the Horn, and that the U.S. perspective would be important. AA/S Carter urged more coordination than normal as both the EU and the U.S. conduct policy reviews.

Zimbabwe

17. (C) Tomasova said Zimbabwe is a difficult issue for the European Union, which is in a wait-and-see mode at the moment. The EU Member States see the value in a unity government that includes Morgan Tsvangirai, but only if that government is effective. The EU is willing to provide financial assistance to the Government of Zimbabwe, but only if it responds to the will of the people and improves its human rights practices. The Member States agree on maintaining informal contacts with members of the Zimbabwean Government, watching for signals that the human rights and political conditions are improving. Noting that Robert Mugabe called for an end of sanctions, but offered no reforms, AA/S Carter stressed that there should be no new development assistance and no easing of sanctions, absent, for example, the release of 30 political prisoners, which he termed a precondition. Carter reassured our EU interlocutors that U.S. sanctions are targeted against specific individuals and institutions, and that it is his hope that we can overcome problems delivering humanitarian assistance.

18. (C) While the international community needs to be firm on conditions for reengagement, we should not get blamed for a unity government's collapse, Carter said, noting that Morgan Tsvangirai and his MDC party were now under duress in having to deliver the IC. The Commission's Roger Moore said it would indeed be disastrous for the international community to fall for 'Come-and-save-Morgan! blackmail.'

Still, Moore said the IC should not miss this opportunity to influence a delicate phase when things could go right and when South Africa is desperate to solve the Zimbabwe crisis. Accordingly, he said, the EC's Head of Mission in Harare is talking daily to select government ministers, at Morgan Tsvangirai's recommendation. AA/S Carter responded that our Ambassador in Harare is also engaging all elements. Carter noted South Africa's regrettable lack of leadership, however; it instead pays 100 million dollars a month for salaries in Zimbabwe as a down payment for tranquillity for the World Cup South Africa will host in 2010. Carter said the Department will host a meeting on Zimbabwe in Washington of like-minded donors, on March 20, to which the Czech EU presidency would be invited.

Mauritania and Guinea

19. (C) AA/S Carter emphasized that the U.S. and EU need to take a strong position against extra-constitutional changes of government in general, and coups in particular, especially given troubling signs of regression in democracy, particularly in West Africa. He argued that the EU's worries about illegal immigration will not be solved by acquiescing to a military coup. He said that the international community needs to hold Guinean coup leader Dadis Camara to his commitments to lift the ban on political party and union activity and to commit to a specific timetable for elections, as well as to stand by his pledge not to run for office himself. Carter urged the EU to maintain firm opposition to the Mauritanian coup by cutting off all but humanitarian assistance and announcing the consideration of targeted sanctions against the junta.

110. (C) Tomasova and Manuel Lopez-Blanco of the Commission said that the EU's reaction to the Mauritanian coup included a freezing of non-humanitarian assistance, but not an imposition of new restrictive measures, which presently lacked a required EU-27 consensus. While the EU called for the restoration of Abdallahi's presidency when he was overthrown, said Tomasova, 'We now see that Abdallahi may not have had necessary democratic support; therefore, the EU now favors a process of internal political dialogue by all parties. If there were consensual agreement to discuss a return to the path of democracy,' Lopez-Blanco said, then

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that would be a sign of progress which could trigger

unfreezing some assistance. He said the Commission, in fact, was proposing to the Council a plan to restart development assistance incrementally as certain conditions are met. He added that such step-by-step reengagement would create incentives for further reform. Lopez-Blanco went on to say that the solution should be an African one, adding that the EU and U.S. should stand behind the AU and ECOWAS and not lecture them. On Guinea, the EC said it was trying to keep ECOWAS and the AU out front, while maintaining the conditions stipulated by the Cotonou agreement.

¶11. (C) AA/S Carter responded that the U.S. does not share this gradual, incremental view, but rather viewed the restoration of democracy as a prerequisite. He said that Aziz should not have a seat at the negotiating table and the EU's approach takes the pressure off him. Carter said the AU is urging us to keep the pressure on; it is not a question of imposing outside standards. The same is the case for Guinea, where ECOWAS leaders have been shocked at the behavior of junta leader Camara.

Great Lakes

¶12. (C) AA/S Carter said the key issue for the Great Lakes region is the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. He said that the humiliation of the FARDC and the erosion of his political base in the east led Kabila to propose that Kagame cooperate against the CNDP of Laurent Nkunda and the FDLR, in a real game changer.⁸ Carter said DRC collaboration with Uganda and Southern Sudan against the Lord's Resistance Army had provided a model for DRC-Rwandan cooperation against the CNDP and FDLR. Responding to questions, he said Kagame's interest in cooperating with Kabila stems from the desire to attract investors to Rwanda by increasing security in the neighborhood. Carter noted that this was a marriage of convenience,⁸ but suggested it could be a long marriage. Responding to further questions, he said Rwanda sees its involvement in eastern Congo against the FDLR as an intelligence operation, and that troops could come back into the area for targeted operations as necessary. While the focus is now on North Kivu, South Kivu, where the FDLR is well entrenched, is a longer-term problem, which Rwanda would like to help solve without violence. Carter said the USG has a military team in the east working to promote the message of a peaceful solution to the long-standing problem of the FDLR, many of whose current members are too young to have been involved in the Rwandan genocide. He said MONUC needs to be enlarged with combat-capable forces, and called for greater international coordination on security sector reform, voicing support for the EU's EUSEC and EUPOL missions.

Peace and Security

¶13. (U) Sebastien Bergeron, of the Council Secretariat's Office for African Peacekeeping Capabilities, provided a review of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, emphasizing the peace and security pillar of that strategy. He said the main challenge is in building up the African Union's Peace and Security architecture and described EU efforts to build the African Standby Force and to coordinate with the UN, NATO, and other actors. Given the EU's involvement, he said a meeting with AFRICOM might be useful.

¶14. (SBU) AA/S Carter said the primary gaps in African capacity are adequacy of funding for operations and equipment, standardized doctrine, strategic lift, logistics and sustainment, and mission leadership. He underscored the need to focus donor assistance on filling gaps to meet peace support operation requirements, increasing the quantity and quality of police, and augmenting civilian peacebuilding resources. He acknowledged the important role of the EU's Peace Support Facility, noted the EU's counter-piracy operation, and underlined the need to focus the AU more on maritime safety and security and to support capacity building efforts. Responding to the proposal for an AFRICOM meeting, he said policy-level EU interaction with AFRICOM should be conducted via the Department of State, or through U.S. missions in the field. U.S. diplomatic missions or the Bureau of African Affairs could then put the EU in touch with the appropriate people in AFRICOM for military coordination.

Development in Africa

¶15. (SBU) AA/S Carter noted that the USG is undertaking a review of assistance towards sub-Saharan Africa, but that the overall commitment is unlikely to change. He said that programs to fight HIV/AIDS, in particular, enjoy widespread support in the U.S. He noted that the June 2007 OECD Development Assistance Peer Review of the European Commission recommended that the EC emphasize results in its development agenda. Adopting more coherent operational strategies would ensure that poverty eradication, the Millennium Development Goals, and cross-cutting issues such as gender, the environment, and HIV/AIDS are addressed. He said that we enjoy good cooperation with the EC in the field and would

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like to advance that cooperation further, focused on country-led strategies. He noted that the February 20 U.S.-EU dialogue on a common agenda for regional economic integration in sub-Saharan Africa was a promising first step in moving collaboration forward.

¶16. (SBU) The EC responded by noting that the U.S. has taken its distance⁸ from multilateral development fora, something AA/S Carter suggested may change with the new administration. The EC also expressed its intent to engage with the U.S. on practical ways to work together.

China

¶17. (C) Before the meeting concluded, AA/S Carter said we

have a unique opportunity to engage China in Africa. He said the U.S. welcomes economic competition with China, particularly as the Chinese engage international standards of accountability and transparency. He noted China,s openness to working with us on development and praised our ongoing dialogue with the Chinese on Africa. He also noted that China is starting to recognize that Africa,s governance problems can impact Chinese economic interests, so it is not enough only to seek profit. Tomasova said the EU Member States are reflecting on China,s role in Africa and considering the possibility of &trilateral8 cooperation with China in Africa. The Council Secretariat cautioned that China maintains that Africans must first accept the concept, and the Africans are, so far, reticent.

118. (U) Participants:

Phillip Carter, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs
Christopher Davis, Minister-Counselor for Political Affairs, USEU
Robert Blackstone, Political-Military Officer, USEU

Bronislava Tomasova, Africa Director, Czech MFA
Amb. Petr Kopriva, Czech Permanent Representation, Chair of the EU,s Africa Working Group
Zdenek Beranek, Horn of Africa Desk, Czech MFA
Petra Postlerova, Czech Permanent Representation, National Delegate to Africa Working Group
Johan Ndisi, Swedish Permanent Representation, National Delegate to Africa Working Group
Sandra Thorsson, Swedish Permanent Representation, National Delegate to Africa Working Group
Roger Moore, Director ACP III, European Commission
Manuel Lopez-Blanco, Director ACP II, European Commission
Henriette Geiger, Deputy Head of Unit, Horn of Africa, Eastern Africa and Indian Ocean, European Commission
Thomas Peyker, Relations with the EU and ACP Institutions Unit, European Commission
Axel Pougín Maisonneuve, Relations with the EU and ACP Institutions Unit, European Commission
Marie-Louise Lindorfer, DG External Relations Africa Unit, EU Council Secretariat
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